"Montani Semper Liberi"

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BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

The compiler of these pioneer memorabilia of John McNeel and his family feels happy in this opportunity to express his grateful appreciation of the assistance rendered by Captain William L. McNeel and Dr Matt Wallace.

John McNeel the ancestor of the McNeel relationship in our county appears to have been the first to occupy the Little Levels by permanent settlement. He was a native of Frederick County, Virginia, but passed much of his early life in or near Cumberland, Maryland. He seems to have been fond of athletics, and in a pugilistic contest his antagonist was so badly knocked out as to be regarded fatally injured. To avoid arrest and trial for murder he refugeed. He followed the trend of the Alleghanies. A long while was spent in these gloomy solitudes, and his sufferings of mind and body can not be even imagined by any of us. Finally, going deeper and deeper into the wilderness, he at last came in view of the Levels, about 1765.

As he overlooked this section from some neighboring mountain he saw much to remind him of his native region. An extensive, wooded plain, bordered by mountain ranges of unsurpassed beauty and very fertile. He decided, as everything looked so much like the old home scenery, to settle here, and chose a site for his cabin near the present home occupied by Hon M J McNeel. Traces of that cabin have been seen by persons yet living between M. J. McNeel's gate on the public road and his residence. If the spot could be identified it would be well to mark it with a piece of the marble recently found in such fabulous quantities close by.

Here the solitary man brooded over his supposed guilt, prayed with his broken heart for pardon, and hunted for his food—subsisting almost entirely upon venison and trout. One day while hunting he met Charles and Edward Kinnison from his old home who had come out here prospecting for a situation. He learned from them that the person he boxed with was not dead nor even seriously hurt. This was indeed good news and then and there he felt free from all bloody stain and he could return without fear of molestation.

Mr McNeel insisted upon his friends to share his cabin with him. He assisted them in making a selection for a home adjoining his tract. The three then set out on their return to the lower Valley of Virginia.

While on this visit home, Mr McNeel married Miss Martha Davis, who was born in Wales, in 1740, and soon after their marriage they came out to the Levels. A few acres were soon cleared off plenty to subsist upon was raised.

Mr McNeel seemed deeply impressed with a sense of gratitude to God for his providential care,—after all his wanderings and fears to permit the lines to fall to him in such a pleasant, wealthy place—that he built a house for worship—the White Pole Church.

In a few years the Dunmore war opened up. The three friends,—McNeel and the two Kinnisons,—went into camp at Lewisburg, and joined the expedition to Point Pleasant, October 10, 1774. They survived that eventful and important contest, came back, but not to remain very long. They went across the eastern mountains and enlisted in some company that went from Frederick County served during the war, and then took up the peaceful tenor of their lives where they had left off. There is a pathetic tradition to the effect that while Mr McNeel was absent to Point Pleasant a child was born and died before his return. The mother with her own hands prepared the coffin and the grave, and buried it. So far as now known this is the first white child buried west of the Blue Mountains, and the first white funeral at the McNeel graveyard. They reared five children two sons and three daughters.

Miriam married John Jordan and lived and died on what is now known as the "Jordan Place," owned by Isaac McNeel. They reared three daughters and five sons. The sons were Jonathan, Isaac, John M., Abram, and Franklin.

Their daughter, Nancy Jordan, first married —— Callison, of James. Upon his decease she became the wife of George Edmiston.

Jane Jordan married Major William Blair, who lived west of Hillsboro, on the farm now occupied by J. G. Beard.

Martha Jordan married the late Joseph Beard, and is living now (1897) with Joseph McNeel, near Hillsboro. Lieut J. J. Beard, of Renicksville, and Mrs Jane McNeel and Mrs William L. McNeel deceased, are her children.

Nancy McNeel, second daughter of the pioneer, married Richard Hill, who settled on Hill's Creek; and is remembered as the person who escaped at Drinnan's, near the mouth of Stony Creek, when James Baker, school teacher, was slain by an Indian, about 1780. Their daughter, Elizabeth Hill, married the late John Bruffey, of Hill's Creek, where some of her descendants yet reside. Among them is T. A. Bruffey, Esq.

George Gillilan married a daughter of Mr and Mrs Hill, but her name could not be recalled.

The sons of Richard Hill were Colonel John Hill, from whom Hillsboro is named; Thomas Hill, Joel Hill, Abram Hill, Isaac Hill, and George Hill.

Martha McNeel, the pioneer's third daughter, married Griffin Evans, moved West, and settled on the Miami River.

Our venerable pioneer reared two sons, Abram and Isaac.

Abram first married a Miss Lamb. Her brother William Lamb, was greatly esteemed by Abram McNeel, and he named his son for him—William Lamb, an expert millwright. Capt McNeel has a lock made by this person that is one of the most elegant specimens of its kind to be found anywhere.

Abraham settled on the land now held by Captain Edgar and by Captain W. L. McNeel and sons, Henry and Joseph. There was one daughter, Elizabeth, who was married to William Hanna, of Greenbrier County.

Abram McNeel's second wife was Miss Bridger, relative of the state Bridger Brothers. By his marriage there were three sons,—Washington, who died in youth, John and Abram who went west.

The daughters of this second marriage were Margaret (Peggy), who married the late William Beard of Renick's Valley and she has been dead but a short while.

Martha (Patsey) married Bayliss Butcher and went west. One of her sons practiced medicine in our county some years since,—Dr F Butcher.

Miriam, another daughter married Christopher Beard, and her son, Dr Beard is a prominent physician in Lewisburg.

Nancy McNeel married James Rankin, and lived on the Greenbrier near the mouth of Locust.

Mary (Polly) was a life-long invalid and never married.

Abram McNeel's third wife was Magdalen Kelly of Monroe County. At the time of their marriage she was the widow Haynes. Rev James Haynes is a grandson of her first husband. The children of this third marriage are Henry Washington and William Lamb.

Henry Washington has lived mostly in the West, and led a busy life for many years, and is there now. Captain William L. McNeel lives on the old homestead along with two of his sons. He has held many positions of trust, and has met the expectations of his most admiring friends in the camp, in the legislature, and in business affairs.

Isaac McNeel, the other son of the pioneer John McNeel, settled upon lands now held by the family of the late Jacob McNeel, Hon M J McNeel, Hon W T Beard, and C E Beard, Esq. His first wife was Rachel McKeever. By this marriage there were four sons,—Paul, John, Richard, and Isaac. The daughters were Hannah, Martha, Nancy and Rachel.

Hannah married Benjamin Wallace, of Bath County, Virginia. Her son is Dr Matt Wallace, an eminent physician at Mill Point. Her daughter Rachel Wallace, became Mrs William Hefner, a prominent citizen of Braxton County, West Virginia. Her other daughter Elizabeth married Christopher Jordan.

Martha McNeel married David McCue, of Nicholas County.

Nancy, the third daughter, married [illegible] Price late of Huntersville, [illegible] County.

Rachel McNeel married Jacob Crouch, of Randolph County.

In reference to the sons of the first marriage it will be remembered that Colonel Paul McNeel was one of the most widely-known citizens of his day.

John McNeel's sons are Isaac McNeel of Mill Point, and Mathew John McNeel, near Hillsboro—now member of the West Virginia House of Delegates.

Richard McNeel's daughter Mary is the wife of Hon W T Beard whose sons, Edgar and Lee are well known.

Isaac McNeel served as Sheriff a number of years and went west.

By his second marriage, Isaac McNeel, son of John the pioneer to Miss Ann Seybert, daughter of Jacob Seybert, south of Stamping Creek there were two sons,—Jacob and Samuel Ellis. Samuel Ellis died a soldier in the war.

The daughters of the second marriage were Catherine, who became the wife of Charles Wade, of Green Hill, Virginia; Elizabeth married Jacob Sharp, Esq, near Edray. Miriam married Joseph McClung of Nicholas County. Magdalen married Dr Robert Williams, of Bath, Virginia.

This brings the chronicle of the remarkable pioneer's family down within the memory and observation of the living. His life was of no ordinary interest. His righteous memory should be in everlasting remembrance. He was the first to "wail with judicious care" amid these mountains the hymns sung by his ancestry amid the moors of Scotland—the Men of the Moss-[illegible].

But very little if any of the lands he pre-empted has passed out of the possession of the relationship, now in the third and fourth generation—a very remarkable circumstance in the history of American families. W T P

The Sin of Profanity

The Wise Man said: "There is nothing new under the sun," and so we find it. Certainly the use of profane language is not new. But there are times and places that seem to be terribly prolific of this wide-spreading evil. And people who speak profanely (if they use the pen at all) are apt to write profanely—some printed books, good in other respects, are not unfrequently marred by the irreverent use of God's holy name.

It is a long time ago that our Mighty Maker drew up by the hand of His servant Moses ten safe rules for man's obedience. Among those ten there is one specially devoted to the keeping of God's holy name, with severe warnings to breakers. Would that the 3d Commandment were written in letters of fire before the eyes of all who speak God's name lightly! Under the old Jewish dispensation this sin was punished with death and in the 24th chapter of Leviticus we read of an instance of this kind.

A thought has sometimes presented itself to me, that if it is indeed true of spoken words going on forever before us, the sound really never ceasing, as the ripple on the water made by a pebble, and these spoken words, every single one, to meet us at the end of mortal career in presence of the Great Judge at His bar—what will the swearer do then when all his wicked oaths come up to him?

Some persons under great excitement, or feeling so as to render their speech more emphatic (as they imagine) will utter God's name lightly; persons who cannot be called swearers, in the common acceptation of the term yet they are wrong, all wrong in this, and commit sin in this for the name of God is holy.

God's goodness is great to us,—each single breath we draw a separate mercy—and shall we use that very breath in insulting him, our Maker and our best friend?

A few men were once in company and all swore save one, said he at last, "I notice you use peculiar language in turns, but I've not had my turn—you'll allow me that." Agreed, and as he seemed to be bursting upon an oath, they bantered him for delay; to which he solemnly replied "My friends, when I see the wisdom of me of flying in the face of the great and mighty God,—and till then I beg you leave off so foolish and so wicked a thing." And a profound silence fell upon the company.

A L P

The Union Soldiers.

In a recent number of THE POCAHONTAS TIMES, over the nom de plume of "A. B. C." an article appeared relative to the Union soldiers, or the men who enlisted in the Union Army from this county as regular volunteers, to serve for three years, or during the war of the Rebellion;—their names and rank.

Twenty Pocahontas men enlisted in Company I 3d West Virginia Volunteer Cavalry viz:

John Kelly, Sergeant
Perry Buzzard,
W H Sims,
C O W Sharp,
Peter H Grimes,
Frank Grimes, Corporal
Abraham Sharp,
C N Kelly
J B Hannah
Beverly Waugh 1st Lieutenant.

Privates in said Company

D K Sims,
Zane H Grimes,
Calvin Kelly,
J H Duncan,
[illegible]
Alfred D Gay
George W McCarty
Clark Grimes,
W A Kelly,
John W Tyler

Then there were soldiers from this county in other regiments, viz:

Andrew Warlow
Nelson Warlow
John Curry
Thomas Akers,
William Gallup
Jeremiah Sharp
Amaziah Buzzard
Clark Kellison
Andrew Kellison
James Kee
William Duffield
William Duncan
Jasper Moore
David Moore
Milton C Sharp
Brown Arbogast
George Arbogast
James E. Johnson

It would be well for soldiers of both armies, now fellow citizens of our county would endeavor to collect the names of all in the war between the States.

Many of our people had great-grandfathers in the Revolution and in the War of 1812, yet we are not satisfactorily aware of it because pains were not taken to remember their names and deeds by their friends.

Let us try to let our descendants know our history—they will be more than pleased to have it,—and they will keep us from being forgotten in years to come. Thirty years or more have elapsed since the war. The war being over and no need of us as yours as soldiers, we came home and resumed our different callings in life. Many of those that wore the blue are now voting with those who wore the grey and vice versa.

S. W

"The word Jingo seems to have established its place in the language and has taken on a certain character of legitimacy which may give it permanence. By Jingo is a common Basque oath as means "By God" the dialectic forms of the word Being Jingo, Jince, Jingo, Ginsco, Yinco, and Yinco. The Jingoes (in a strict etymological sense) are therefore the swearers, those without moderation or restraint, prone to premature explosions, boastful, vain, overconfident."—New York Tribune.

"Maybe it is Mr Hanna that is to bring prosperity after he gets in to the Senate.—Atlanta Constitution.